ETHNIC ECOLOGY OF KOLKATA CITY

Ph. D PROPOSAL (SYNOPSIS)

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The word Ethnic is derived from Greek word *ethnos*, meaning a "people" or "nation" but it is too broad to define. To narrow it down, ethnic group can be defined as an involuntary one possessing a common ancestry, regional origin and cultural tradition, with a strong sense of belongings and cohesiveness, living as a minority in a larger society or host culture. Within geography, the study of ethnicity permeates through a number of sub disciplines that include cultural, social, historical, economic, political, urban geography and the work of geographers emphasizes the spatial nature of ethnicity at multiple scales—from the nation to the body—focusing on individual and group place attachment. Ethnic geography is the study of the spatial and ecological aspects of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are highly territorial in organization and often practice distinctive adaptive strategies. They occupy clearly defined area whether in rural or urban, and place is an essential aspect of ethnicity.

Ethnicity is a complex phenomenon. The task of the theoritian is to outline at least what can be essential dimension of this phenomenon and to indicate the directions of their possible variations. If researchers choose to study in depth only one or few aspects of the phenomenon, it is logically incumbent upon them to point out how these selected aspects may relate to the other aspects of the phenomenon. There are twelve aspects of culture or ethnicity like history, social Status factor, Social Group interaction patterns(Intra-group and inter-group), value orientation, language and communication, family life process, healing beliefs and practices ,religion, arts and expressive forms, diet or food, recreation and clothing. There are some keywords which are important to understand the concept of ethnicity like ethnic group, types of group, ethnic identity.

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10.07.2018

10/7/18

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Ethnic group as referring to a community-type group of people who share and practice the same culture or to descendants of such people who may not share this culture but who identify themselves with this ancestral group. Types of ethnic group uses as criteria of classification of group organization, degree and nature of self awareness in ethnic organization, structural location in inter ethnic relations and the generational factor .According to these criteria we can distinguish the types of ethnic groups like primary and secondary ethnic group, Folk and nationality community ethnic groups, majority and minority ethnic groups and lastly young and old ethnic group. The Scholar of ethnicity must be as much aware of the varying conditions of ethnicity and variation in the nature of ethnicity over time as of the conceptual distinctions and theoretical possibilities regarding it .On the individual level, ethnicity is social-psychological process which gives an individual a sense of belongings and identity. It is, one of a number of social phenomena which produce a sense of identity. Ethnic identity can be defined as a manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social system and in which they perceived others as locating them in relation to those system (Isajiw, 1992).

The societal structure of West Bengal is a multiethnic in nature. The demographic cross profile from north to south and east to west comprising of people from different religion, sect, race and tribe. The cosmopolitan nature of the society makes it more lively and dynamic. People from several ethnic backgrounds influence each other and enrich the culture of West Bengal. Nearly three quarters of the people of West Bengal reside in the villages. Hinduism is one of the major religion followed by the people, apart from it people of different ethnic groups stay here. About 40 tribes constitute one-tenth of the total population of West Bengal such as Santals, Oraons, Munas, Lepchas, and Bhutias.

Kolkata (88° 30'E - 22° 33' N.), is the capital city and the cultural hearth of West Bengal. Located on the east bank of the Hooghly river, it is the principal commercial, cultural, and educational centre of East India, while the Port of Kolkata is India's oldest operating port as well as its sole major riverine port. As of 2011census, the city had 4.5 million residents; the urban agglomeration, which comprises the city and its suburbs, was home to approximately 14.1 million, making it the third-most populous metropolitan area in India. More than four-fifths

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of the population is **Hindu**. **Muslims** and **Christians** constitute the largest minorities, but there are some **Sikhs, Jains,** and **Buddhists**. The dominant language is **Bengali**, but **Urdu, Oriya, Tamil, Punjabi** and other languages also are spoken by the inhabitants.

Kolkata is a cosmopolitan city, other than Indians, groups present include a variety of peoples from elsewhere in Asia (notably Bangladeshis and Chinese), Europeans, North Americans, and Australians. Kolkata was segregated under British rule, the Europeans living in the city centre and Indians living to the north and south. The pattern of segregation has continued in the modern city, although the distribution is now based on religious, linguistic, educational, and economic criteria. Shantytowns and low-income residential areas, however, exists side-by-side with more affluent areas. The density of population is extremely high, and overcrowding has reached virtually intolerable proportions in many sections of the city. Kolkata experienced a high rate of population growth for more than a century, and events such as the partitioning of Bengal in 1947 and warfare in **Bangladesh** in the early 1970s precipitated massive population influxes. Large refugee colonies also have sprung up in the northern and southern suburbs. In addition, a great number of migrants from other states—mostly from neighboring Bihar and Orissa and eastern Uttar Pradesh—have come to Kolkata in search of employment.

Kolkata is a cosmopolitan city with great ethnic diversity. The diversity can be found in terms of language, religion, race and place of origin. Looking at the ethnic diversity one can definitely remark that Kolkata embrace a miniature of world within her small lap. Traditionally Kolkata is known for its authentic Bengali culture, but coexistence and interaction between different ethnic groups make the cultural cityscape of Kolkata very colorful one. The proposed research work will try to unveil the ecological processes which operate the interactions between various ethnic groups. All the cultural traits of Kolkata somehow are modified by alien cultural waves. Food is a prominent trait of Bengali culture and it is very famous throughout the country as well as the world. Now Chinese food is totally incorporated in the flavor of Kolkata. Most of the restaurants of Kolkata provide Chinese food to the Bengali customers due to its high demand. Continental food or Thai food is highly welcomed by the Bengalis. This is a sign of acculturation. Kolkata is inhabited by various linguistic groups that are why the inhabitants of Kolkata need to know more than one language. Many Bengalis can speak in Hindi very fluently as they have to communicate with the Hindi speaking people in day to day life. Knowing English is a must for all, who lives in

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Kolkata because the linguistic variation is so great in number one must follow a universal medium of communication. This can be sited as an example of adaptation which is an ecological process. The ethnic diversity is also visible through the spatial segregation of ethnic communities in different pockets of Kolkata. The ecological process of competition, segregation and succession can be defined by the spatiality of ethnic groups. For example, Park Circus, Raja Bazar, Khidirpore are some areas which mostly resided by the people from Muslim community. This segregation gives rise to a certain kind of landscape. This landscape is very much different from the landscape of Park Street which is a continuation of Park Circus area but mostly resided by Anglo Americans who belong to Christian community. Both the communities reside side by side not entering in each other's territory.

This kind of spatial segregation often creates some discrepancies. Like, as the Muslim way of living is very much distinct from the Hindu way of living, so sometimes both the communities avoid each other. This kind of avoidance culminates into social distance which is not very healthy for maintaining the cosmopolitan nature of Kolkata.

The proposed research work is focused on the ecological principles between the ethnic communities of Kolkata. How each community acculturates and assimilates with the host society or other communities and interaction and acceptance of the host society is basic norm of this study. Some examples are given in respect of this concept. Food is one of the major cultural trait which varies with changing ethnicity. Chinese food, cakes and pastries, biriyani, kabab etc which are not traits of Bengali culture but these foods became integral part of Bengali culture. Now Chinese restaurants are found in every corner of Kolkata with maximum concentration are seen in the China town area. Now a day these Chinese cuisines are highly accepted in every community. Biriyani, which is purely Muslim originated cuisine but people of Kolkata prominently accept it as their daily food habit.

So it is evidently observed that food habit of different community is highly accepted according to the basis of class, taste, generation and social position. As previously said nature of Kolkata is highly cosmopolitan in character so diversity in linguistic community is very common. Bengali, Hindi, English, Urdu, Tamil, Gujrati, Gurumukhi etc linguistic communities and Chinese, Armenian, Anglo, Parshi etc outside ethnic groups are commonly share land of Kolkata. Now these groups have to communicate for the purpose of economic, social, cultural and education so

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language is the only medium for it. So every community are forced to adopted others language. Just because hindi is our national and English is international language both the language are preferably accepted by most of the people. Now a remarkable character is shown in every language group that loosing off originality and purity of language in spoken format. In conversation admixture of language is very common now. Integration and acceptance of religious festivals and cultural programme in Kolkata is highly recommendable. Like Bengali's are participating and celebrating X-Mas, Good Friday, Ester ,Chinese New year, Eid, Pongal etc festival and other communities overwhelmly participate Durga puja, Diwali, Holy etc. each and every religious places are now open to all. From the above discussion it is very clear that each every community have their own segregated habitat, social and cultural feelings but all of them harmoniously bonded with each other in a chain of interaction in different perspective.

There have been attempts to understand, define and explain the different ethnic groups from different perspectives. The socio-political structure, cultural characteristics and occupational structure have been the major focus area for discussion since these aspects show the unique characteristics being in a continuous transition. As a contradiction to this trend of academic interest, surprisingly very few studies have been conducted with focus on the rights of these ethnic communities and provide analysis of the legal support of it. There has been very little attempt explore the issues related to their role in governance or decision making and how it impacts their wellbeing and socio economic position. The need of such study is increasingly realized as these communities or ethnic minorities are often the victims of the social seclusion and in a constant quest to preserve the original identity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Review of Books

This part contain about brief review of literature with special focus on history of Kolkata, a pre-colonial cosmopolitan city and Studies on ethnicity, are related to different concept like race, tribe, class, religious group, immigrant group, language group etc. Some of these related contains are briefly reviewed below. Due to extensive bulk of literature are available on these topics we have to confine our appraisal issue oriented.

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In 1955, **Egon Ernest Bergel** introduced a book on sociological issues of urban areas. Where he discussed about different approaches, social geography, typology, demography, urban pathology etc in detailed manner. In 1986, **John Rex** illustrated Sociological theories and concept of race and ethnicity. His focus of discussion is mainly based on how race and ethnic relation determine structure of colonial, multi-cultural society and metropolitan circumstances. **Leila Narayan**, in 1986 focuses on cultural and structural aspects of ethnicity. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to understand the process of cultural change and continuity and also the extent of integration with the host society. Using the network approach, interaction of Gujaratis within their community and with the wider society has been analyzed. In this study the focus is on the overarching identity of Gujarati language and within it the differentiation based 0n religion. So she has distinguished between Gujarati Jain and Gujarati Brahmin. She has found that while language functions as an interest tie, it does not function as an affective tie. It is the subgroup identities of religion and region that serve affective ties. In 1986, **Nitish Ranjan Ray** introduced a book regarding historical profile of Kolkata and deeper studies of various aspects like pre-colonial, colonial, urban issues, social milieus are discuss prominently. **Mesrove J. Seth** published research oriented historical evidences of Armenian's life in India in 1988.Different aspect of Armenian life has decorated here. Like other part of India, Kolkata also symbolize their presence in infant seminary, national academy, almshouse etc which is more topic of interest. Two Volumes of Edited book by **Sukanta Chaudhuri** in 1990, demonstrated various topics of Calcutta. Volume 1 covers the past from the origins of the name to early twentieth century's literature, art and architecture of old Calcutta with its dominant personalities. And volume 2 provides an accounts of Calcutta's Twentieth century and predictions regarding future development and contemporary issues and subjects. In 1990 ,**Terry G. Jordon** and **Lester Rowntree** has introduced cultural geography on the basis of five themes cultural region, cultural diffusion, cultural ecology, cultural integration, cultural landscape and these themes are applied and verified on various geographical topics. Ethnicity is one of them, nurtured in this thematic framework in North American situation.

In 1991, **Paul Brass** presents a distinctive theoretical perspective on ethnicity and nationalism, by drawing examples from a wide variety of situations, especially from south Asia, Eastern Europe and Soviet Union. He bases his theory on two arguments: The first is that there is nothing

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inevitable about the rise of ethnic identity and its transformation into nationalism, rather, the conversions of cultural differences into bases for political differentiation between people arises only under specific circumstances. Thus ethnicity and nationalism are not 'given' but are social and political constructions. The second theoretical argument stresses the crucial role of the relationships between elites and the States particularly the roles of collaborators with and opponents of state authority and state intrusion into regions inhabited by the ethnic groups. He uses the term elite to refer to formations within ethnic groups and classes that often play critical roles in ethnic mobilization. An edited Bengali book in 1991 by **Arupratan Bhattacharya** represented different aspects of Kolkata. Within it a chapter convey social and demographic condition of Kolkata from past. In the Year 1996 **John Huchinson and Anthony D.Smith** edited a book regarding history, concept, theory, conflicts of ethnicity. Here field of ethnicity is enriched with scholarly literature and concern balance between various geographical and cultural areas of world**. Randall Collins** introduced a book in 1997 on theoretical sociology. It is attempt to explain core theoretical knowledge of social world. **Pijush Kanti Roy(2008)** described in his book, Calcutta as a epitome of India as well as world for her multinational population with the inauguration of British rule in India. These people are Chinese, Armenian, jews, Portuguese and Greek etc. Here this book reveals the analytical historical evidences and present scenario of these ethnic communities who are part and parcel of metropolitan Calcutta. In 1999**, R.M.Chopra** connecting Punjub and Bengal through his book. A long historical, Religious, social, Educational, national and commercial point of view Punjabi-Bengali affinity is very strong. About to half million of Punjabi are settled in Calcutta for the last several Generation which interest of study through this monograph. The published second edition of **Robin Cohen** in 2008 discussed about the migrants and minority communities trying to capture new relationship between home and abroad. Where provides the definition, comparative and synoptic aspects of global diasporas. The book on Kolkata by **Aditi chatterji** in 2009 is the fruit of in-depth research of urban landscape, ethnic diversity, migration pattern for many years. Kolkata had migrants of diverse origin, religions and ethnic backgrounds having their own language, culture and identity. This book reflecting mosaic of their social cultural landscape in Kolkata city. Plurality of cultures and their interactions eminently revealed in this book. The book by **P.Thankappan Nair** in 1987 present voluminous work on Kolkata's history of streets.

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Name of the streets are given by renowned people of different community people from pre-colonial era which is most significant for the study.

Articles/ Papers

In 1969 an eminent work done by **Brian J. L. Berry and Philip H. Rees** on factorial ecology of Kolkata This paper represents a modest attempt to initiate systematic cross-cultural ecological analysis by means of a structured factorial ecology of Calcutta. The investigation reveals an interpenetration of pre-industrial and industrial ecological components, consistent with notions that the city is in some transitional developmental stage. At the same time, the changing significance of caste in ordering Indian society is revealed. In 1993, **Brigitte S.Waldorf** discuss a paper on segregation method. Dissimilarity Index is used commonly to measure segregation experience in minority community in Urban Space. This paper propose new approach for measuring segregation based on Comparative evaluations of neighborhood Characteristics as a determinant of spatial behavior in cities. A article by **Daniel D. Arreola** in 1995 examines the character of the ideal landscape –making process in the Texas Mexican City by the dominant ethnic Mexican Population who are migrated in Texas city in USA. In 1998, **Robert E.Wood** gave an interesting Article on Touristic ethnicity where discuss about tourism as a form of ethnic relations and development of touristic ethnic cultures becomes an integral part of the construction of ethnic identity. **John D.Brewer** published a methodological series edition on ethnography in 2000,which is very essential for social research to collect data from field. Different techniques are discussed here. Another paper by **Elliott D.Green** in 2006, presented multiple definitions of ethnicity and he proposed a new definition of ethnicity that is based on three core elements namely common decent, a common history and a common homeland. This definition allows scholar to differentiate ethnic group from others. A research paper presented in 2009 by **Wsevolod W.Isajiw** give definitions and different dimension of Ethnicity where this complex theoretical outline indicates different directions of their possible variations. . In 2011, **Joseph P.Stoltman** describe how 21th century urban patterns are change and with this diversity in ethnicity and culture in urban area. This paper focuses on the current observations, direction, and methodology, inter-disciplinary approach in urban ethnic geography. The Research essay of **Himadri Banerjee in** 2012 , Punjabi-Sikh one of the India's religious minority residing in a far away location, communicates with the host society in Kolkata, remembers their home memories.

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This article explores their extent of success in maintaining difference with the host Society. The brief article of **Arpita Bose** in 2013 offers a preliminary overview of Chinese migration and business activities, occupational characteristics and various contributions of this community to the economy of the city and places Chinese migration to Kolkata in a wider context. In 2012 **Trina Vithayathil and Gayatri Singh** present a article on residential segregation of India's seven largest metro city by using the ward level data of 2001 census. Mainly caste wise Segregation is main focus of their work.

SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA:

Ethnic groups are the keepers of distinctive cultural traditions and the focal point of various kinds of social interactions. They can provides not only group identity, but also friendship, marriage partners, recreational facilities, business success and a political power base. Kolkata (88° 30'E - 22° 33' N.) is cultural capital of India as we all known. From the very beginning Bengali is the indigenous ethnic cultural community, but from the colonial period open up the door for every alien ethnic community (Chinese, Anglo-Indian, Muslim, Buddhist, Bihari Sikh and Tibetan).They bring with any number of differences including language, religious faith, folklore, music, food ,tradition ,neighborhood ,values, community links, kinship and migratory status. They are segregated some pockets of Kolkata cosmopolitan area. So selection of my study area on the basis of below mention evidences of ethnic foot prints.

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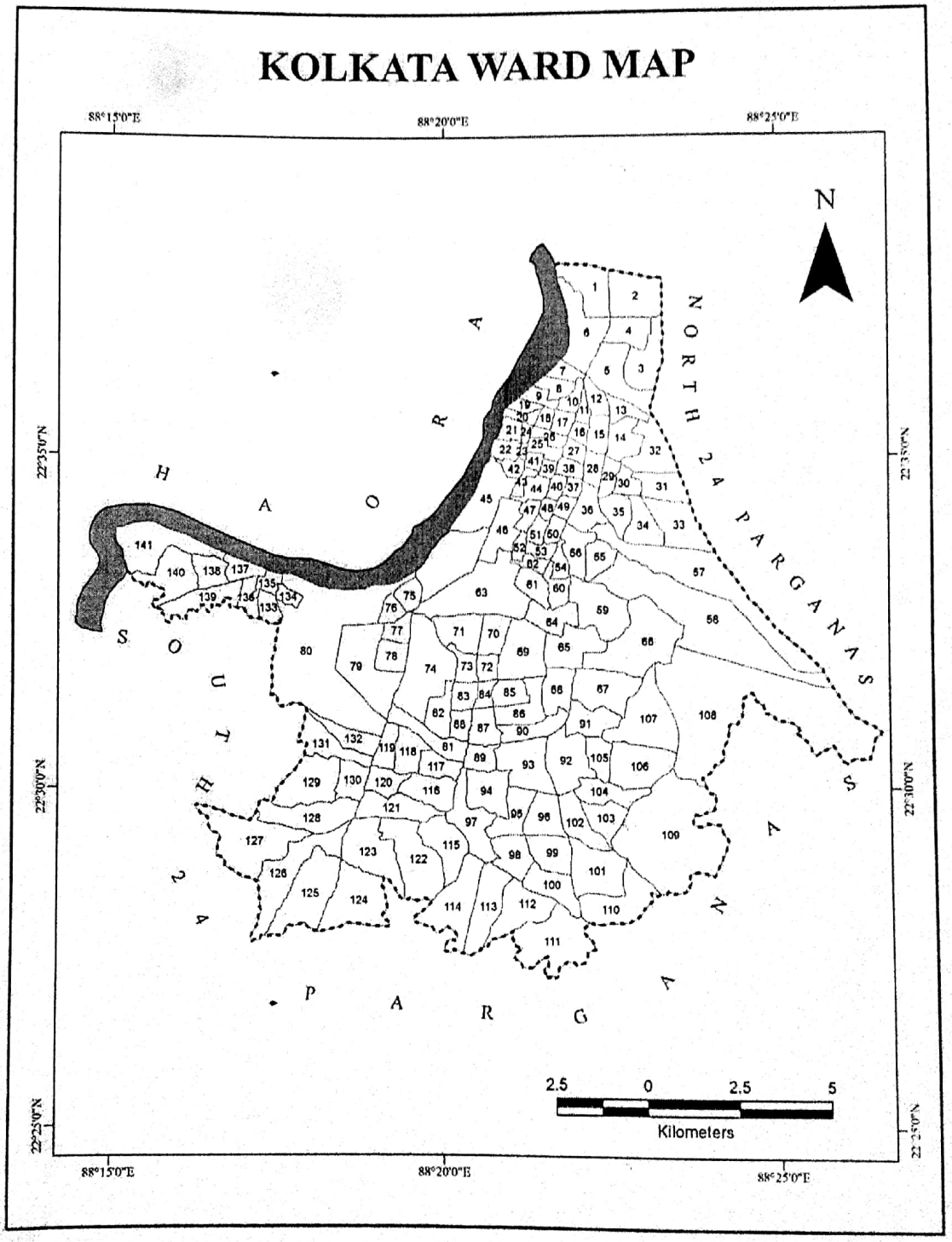

Fig: Kolkata Municipal Corporation Area

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RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:-

As the world enters in the 21st century urban population reflects greater diversity in ethnicity and culture. Kolkata is one of the important metropolitan cities in India which endures many ethnic minority groups. Day by day the increase in the number of people living and working in the city. This inhabitant shapes and reshapes the landscape of Kolkata. Many of them came here for the better economic, educational, medical, housings opportunities and typically they come from variety of places and variety of backgrounds. These newcomers play a role in creating a social hierarchy from which the urban inhabitants navigates the city. Just because intrinsically change of culture and economy of this cosmopolitan, the unique ethnic landscape of smaller groups often quickly obscure by dominant influence of the places, like China Town , park street. So by adopting cultural geographers theme (cultural region, cultural diffusion, cultural ecology, cultural integration and cultural landscape)I have been able to look at many facets of ethnicity, decipher some of the reasons why the ethnic mosaic come to be, and interpret the cultural imprints of ethnic groups.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:-

1. As the spatial extension of Kolkata increases, the population pressure is getting high which in turn resulting in more complex ethnic mosaic.

2. There is marked spatial segregation of ethnic communities in Kolkata city.

3. A vivid social distance can be seen with in the ethnic communities of Kolkata which mainly sprang from the cultural diversity.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:-

1. To trace, identify and origin of the major ethnic groups in Kolkata and their spatial distribution are concern of study.

2. To reveal the mobilization of ethnic community in the city after growth and identify the changing nature of space by ethnic community and vice- versa.

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3. To identify the social pattern of the ethnic community and identify the social process which are playing an active role in creating those pattern by social area analysis.

4. To understand the relation between the social exclusion of the ethnic communities and effectiveness of the decentralization policies (specially focusing on 74th amendment) in ensuring active community participation for the preservation of the cultural identity, narrowing down to the rights and requirement s of the ethnic minorities.

5. To identify the means to incorporate the social need of ethnic communities in the planning process and the required legal and institutional structure,

LIMITATIONS:- Kolkata as a district contains large volume and density of population. So, my area of interest is only 141 wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:-

1. Study of different literary sources based on the research topic.
2. Collection of different kinds of maps for the cartographic representation and statistical representation.
3. Collection of secondary data on ethnic cultural communities from different official sources like Anthropological Survey of India, Municipal corporation of Kolkata, clubs and welfare association of communities etc
4. Ethnographic Study
5. Collection of primary data by interviewing the community people.
6. Statistical analysis of collected primary and secondary data.
7. Representation of the analyzed data by various cartographic and statistical techniques.

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TENTATIVE CHAPTERS-

CHAPTER ONE: Ethnicity and Spatiality

- Statement of the Problem
- Concept of ethnicity: general understanding of ethnicity.
- Definition: various definitions by scholars with quotations (must mention some American scholars), Definitional Problems and contradictions.
- Theories dealing with ethnicity: Sociology, Anthropology,Ethnography, Political theories
- Concept of Ethnic Ecology
- Place of ethnic study in the discipline of Geography: Evolution.
- Literature Review
- Objective
- Hypothesis
- Methodology
- Rationality of the Topic
- Limitations of the Study

CHAPTER TWO: A Brief Introduction of Kolkata

- Introduction
- Location of the Study area
- Growth and genesis of Kolkata.
- Administrative Setup
- Physical features: Geology, Relief, Drainage, Soil, Climate
- Demographic Characteristics
- Social Infrastructure
- Physical Infrastructure

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- Economy
- Cultural Distinctiveness

CHAPTER THREE: Muslim Community of Kolkata: Religious Ethnic Group

- General characteristics of this community and religion
- Basic Details of Muslim community in Kolkata: Mainly Data Base.
- Brief History of Muslim inhabitance in Kolkata
- Temporal growth
- Spatial distribution
- Socio-economic Status
- Cultural traits and distinctiveness: language, food habit, festivals, norms, taboos
- Interaction spaces: Spaces of socialization, cultural assimilation
- Indentifying the spaces of segregation
- Impact: Psychological, social and cultural and their spatial reflections

CHAPTER FOUR: Chinese Community of Kolkata: Racial Ethnic Group

- General characteristics of this community and Chinese Culture
- Basic Details of Chinese community in Kolkata: Mainly Data Base.
- Brief History of Chinese invasion in Kolkata
- Temporal growth
- Spatial distribution
- Socio-economic Status
- Cultural traits and distinctiveness: language, food habit, festivals, norms, taboos
- Interaction spaces: Spaces of socialization, cultural assimilation
- Indentifying the spaces of segregation
- Impact: Psychological, social and cultural and their spatial reflections

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CHAPTER FIVE: LINGUISTIC GROUPS OF KOLKATA

- Linguistic diversity of Kolkata: information and data based
- North Indian language groups: linguistic origin, hermeneutics, scriptures
- South Indian language groups: linguistic origin, hermeneutics, scriptures
- Spatial distribution
- Adaptation of Bengali
- Socio-economic Status
- Interaction spaces: Spaces of socialization, cultural assimilation
- Indentifying the spaces of segregation
- Impact: Psychological, social and cultural and their spatial reflections

CHAPTER SIX: MARWARI COMMUNITY OF KOLKATA: PROVINCIAL ETHNIC GROUP

- General characteristics of this community and Marwari Culture
- Basic Details of Marwari community in Kolkata: Mainly Data Base.
- Brief History of Marwari invasion in Kolkata
- Temporal growth
- Spatial distribution
- Socio-economic Status
- Cultural traits and distinctiveness: language, food habit, festivals, norms, taboos
- Interaction spaces: Spaces of socialization, cultural assimilation
- Indentifying the spaces of segregation
- Impact: Psychological, social and cultural and their spatial reflections

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CHAPTER SEVEN: Ethnic Mosaic of Kolkata

- The cosmopolitan nature of Kolkata
- The Religious Groups of Kolkata: Spatio-temporal analysis
- The racial diversity of inhabitants of Kolkata: Spatio-temporal analysis
- People from other province of India: Spatio-temporal analysis

CHAPTER EIGHT: Ethnic ecology of Kolkata

- Identification of Spaces of Ethnic Segregation
- The social processes of Ethnic Ecology
- Social Area Analysis of Kolkata
- Finding the areas of Ecological imbalances
- Theorizing the Ethnic dilemma of Kolkata : Valediction with pre-existing theories
- The residuals

CHAPTER NINE: Eliminating the Imbalances: Planning Perspectives

- Critique to the existing planning and policies
- Physical Infrastructural Planning
- Social and Economic Planning
- Informal Planning
- Renewal of Cultural traits

CHAPTER TEN: Summary and Conclusion.

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Possible Outcomes:-

As we all know that Kolkata is a cosmopolitan city in true sense free from local, provincial, or national ideas, prejudices, or attachments; at home all over the world. So many people from different part of country as well as world for serve their purpose. In Kolkata there are so many prominent ethnic segregated areas. Some time these people feel social distance from the other community. Evidences said that in Kolkata communal violence make them insecure in performing social relations. It is very unethical and unjustified with these ethnic communities. In our country everybody have their constitutional right to live their own life without disturbing others. So everybody should assimilate and accommodate in this habitat with proper resolutions of every problem. Exchange of ideas give enriched cultural, social economic, religious and educational platform for the next generation. As well as to identify the policy and legal linkage to strengthen the participation of the ethnic communities to ensure their rights. This will empower them to have better access to urban services, employment and ensure they represent of their culture in the city. This research also aims at a people centric urban planning with better dialogue between the ethnic communities and the local governance

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